



Parks and Recreation Department  
Tuesday, September 22, 2009

Meeting

A regularly schedule meeting of the Parks and Recreation Board was held on Tuesday, September 29, 2009 at the Boards and Commission Conference Room, 301 West 2<sup>nd</sup>. St. Room 1101.

Board Members Present: Board Chair Linda Guerrero, Sara Marler, Jane Rivera, Jerry Perales, Carol Lee and Hill Abell.

Board Members Absent: Mark Vane

Staff Members Present: Stuart Strong, Ricardo Soliz, Chris Yanez, Robert Brennes, Jenna Neal and Tino Garcia.

A. Meeting called to order

Board Chair Guerrero called the meeting to order at 6:27 p.m.

B. Approval of Minutes

1. Board Member Rivera moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Board Member Marler. Motion carried.

C. Citizen Communication

Elizabeth Gardner, Austin Rowing Center, made the Board aware of the club's on-going programs and invited them to participate in a "Learn to Row" class that is currently being offered.

Diane McDermid, Austin Rowing Center, talked about the club's adaptive programs, especially the new Para-Olympic programs that are being offered to returning wounded soldiers.

Joe Kendall, informed all about the Texas Rowing Center's partnership with the Texas River School.

Daniel Moses Perez, expressed his dissatisfaction with the staff of the Camacho Recreation Center.

#### D. Briefs

##### 2. Robert Donley Museum status update.

Marcos De Leon, President, East Town Lake Citizen Association, is not in support of the placing the museum on parkland. In expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of community input in the process.

Gavino Fernandez, is also opposed to placing the museum on parkland and announced that the community was also 100% opposed to it as well. Also, he has filed a complaint with the Attorney General's Office because he felt the department did not provide the backup information that he requested.

David Moses Perez, is opposed to the placing the museum on the identified lots.

##### 3. ZACH Scott Theatre Expansion

Nick Naccarato, Elizabeth Challener and Arthur Anderson briefed the Board on the new ZACH Scott Theatre Expansion. Mr. Naccarato explained that the building is part of the 2006 bond project and is a collaborative project in conjunction with the City of Austin. The project is currently only in the 50% design stage.

Elizabeth Challener said that the theatre, already 75 years old, has raised most of the 20 million dollars it needs for the expansion.

Arthur Anderson provided mostly preliminary sketches of the theatre which will have over 418 seats and 30, 561 total square footage. A rain garden will collect all run off and storm water and the expansion calls for the planting of 28 new trees. There will be no restaurant or café as indicated earlier. Don Gardner has been consulted to determine the fate of a large elm tree that is in the proposed expansion plans.

##### 4. Downtown Parks and Open Space

Jim Robertson, Planning and Development Review Department provided an overview of the Downtown Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The overview consisted of the project summary as well as a detailed overview of issues and opportunities.

##### 5. Lady Bird Lake Sign System Phase I.

David McDermid, RVI Planning Division, provided images of several prototypical signs that will be placed on the trail. Ten (10) interpretive, regulatory and locator type signs will be placed in strategic sites along the trail. Restrictive type signs will be placed at a later date. All signs will be modular and can be changed over time. Pfluger Bridge will

have informational type signage that will detail the history of the development of the trail. Signs related to accessibility will be addressed in phase II or III. All are based on the Society of Environmental Graphic Design, a nationally universal system used in the United States.

#### 6. Off-Leash Area Committee Update.

Jenna Neal, PARD Planning Division, reported on the functions of the Off-Leash Area Task Force. She indicated that two different groups have been formed: 1) group A, is the site assessment group whose responsibilities include developing a scorecard and evaluating off-leash sites; 2) Group B, will develop criteria guidelines to form the Off Leash Area Advisory Committee. A 13 member advisory committee will be selected by an ad-hoc election committee. The committee will be responsible for reviewing all applications and in October, 2009 the group will meet to elect officers. The committee has been tasked to evaluate the proposed dog policy and to review the survey data on all of the off-leash areas.

#### 7. Proposed Heritage Tree Ordinance

Michael Embesi, City Arborist, reported on the proposed Heritage Tree Ordinance. He provided a summary of the original tree ordinance; including the two previous versions. The Council has now instructed staff to work with interested stakeholders to refine the Heritage Tree Ordinance. A working group has been formed consisting of several associations and neighborhood groups, including the Sierra Club, Save our Springs, Urban Forestry Board, Environmental Board and the Planning Commission. The proposed new ordinance would include a tree or stem that has a diameter of 24 inches or more. This criteria applies to approximately 20 species around Austin. He reported that if a tree poses a hazard to life or property and is slated for removal, there is an avenue for appeal if the stem or branch exceeds 24-30 inches. The appeal can be submitted to the Environmental Board, the Urban Forestry Board or the Land Use Commission. In addition to this brief, other briefings will be given to the Urban Forestry Board, Environmental Board, Electric Utility Commission, Codes and Ordinances, Planning Commission and the City Council.

#### F. New Business and Action Items

#### 8. Election of Officers

Board Member Rivera moved to elect Linda Guerrero as Chair, and Sara Marler as Vice-Chair, seconded by Board Member Hill. Motion carried, 6-0.

9. Election of Downtown Commission Member

Board Member Rivera moved to elect Linda Guerrero as Downtown Commission Member, seconded by Board Member Marler. Motion carried, 6-0.

10. Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding permanent and temporary use of Metz Park.

Glen Taffinder, Watershed Protection Department, reported that Watershed is requesting permanent and temporary use of parkland for work to repair an existing pipe and to stabilize a storm sewer outfall that empties into Lady Bird Lake. Work will begin in March 2010 and will be completed by June 2010. His department is requesting approval for permanent and temporary use to access and repair an existing storm pipe located at 2615 Canterbury Street. This work is to be performed in conjunction with the 4<sup>th</sup> Street Drainage Improvements project and is conditional on relocation of the work area ingress to a point west of the existing parking lot at Canterbury and Pleasant Valley Road. Board Member Rivera moved to approve the recommendation, seconded by Board Member Marler but with a new construction entrance. Motion carried 6-0.

11. Support action by the Aquatic Board regarding charging fees at Barton Springs Pool during the summer hours while lifeguards are on duty.

This item was pulled by Board Chair Guerrero.

12. Make a recommendation to the Director regarding the restoration plan for Bull Creek District Park.

Chris Herrington, Watershed Protection Department, briefed the Board on the Bull Creek District Park (BCDP). He indicated that presently swimming is not supported on the BCDP because the park does not meet safe levels for swimming. Staff has reviewed public comments from various meetings held, including comments associated with media postings, direct communication from citizens, and focus groups. As a result of the data collected, WPD and PARD, propose the following alternative proposal for consideration.

Recommendation #1

Close Bull Creek District Park in November 2009 for restoration project and monitor water quality during closure.

In addition:

- Staff will include the public on restoration project design
- The closure is estimated to last 6 months, and will be done in coordination with low water crossing improvements to minimize area disturbance.
- The closure will allow crews time to safely conduct work in the park and will provide time for new vegetation to be established.
- A monitoring baseline will be initiated under minimal impact conditions. If the water quality does not improve, staff will continue source investigations
- The closure will allow time for the aquatic system to reset with reduced fecal contamination loading.

#### Recommendation #2

PARD to open off leash area in Emma Long by December 2009.

- Additional off leash area will help alleviate over crowding at other off leash areas during the closure of BCDP.
- Emma Long provides an off leash area with water access.
- Water quality impacts from off leash uses in Emma Long are reduced because of the high volume and flow of the Colorado River.
- PARD will create a process for off leash users to access Emma Long without the standard entrance fee, potentially in conjunction with off leash licensing.

#### Recommendation #3

PARD to implement increase enforcement of park rules

- Short-term: PARD to work with APD park units to improve improvements of existing park rules.
- Long-term: PARD to implement Park Ranger Program for increased enforcement (goal May 2010)
- Staff to investigate additional avenues for enforcement in conjunction with Law Department, Off Leash Task Force and public outreach staff.

#### Recommendations #4

PARD, the citizen Off Leash Task Force, and animal control staff to pursue additional source of funding via fee or licensing programs, with recommendations due January 2010.

- Additional funding needed to support maintenance and enforcement activities in off leash areas.
- Additional dog licensing requirements to use off leash areas could be a mechanism to deliver education and new revenue.

#### Recommendation #5

Following restoration, open Bull Creek as on-leash only park (projected spring 2010) for a 6 month evaluation period; continue water quality monitoring.

On-leash use will be allowed if contact recreation standards are met following park closure.

Time period for on leash use evaluation may need to be extended if weather conditions do not provide sufficient time period for assessment under normal flows.

Staff will develop measurement methods to assess success of park land and riparian area restoration.

#### Recommendation #6

Evaluate monitoring results of on-leash use in a public process to determine appropriate long-term allowable uses in the park (projected fall 2010).

Long-term allowable uses may include prohibition of dogs in the park, continued on-leash use, or program for all leash use evaluation.

Several questions arose regarding whether Emma Long would be temporary or permanent and whether the residents around the lake had been notified. Other concerns expressed were: 1) Make Emma Long on-leash only; 2) Emma Long is not suitable because it serves as our water supply; 3) fencing and signage issues along with the flow from Turkey Creek; 4) collect data on the number of dogs that come in; and 5) entrance to the park must have a fee.

#### Citizen Communications:

-Brian Engle simply asked 5 questions:

If Bull Creek is the cleanest watershed in Austin, why the sudden urge to close the OLA?

If higher levels of contamination are taken upstream from the creek, why is the city still blaming dogs for the high bacteria use?

If the city isn't going to re-build the dam or dredge the creek, why will removing the dogs restore the swimming hole?

Why build a meeting as a stakeholder group, and pack the meeting with city employees?

Why have vague language and lack of clear benchmarks?

Debra Bailey, Bull Creek Dog Off leash Group and Bull Creek Foundation, (BCF/BCDOG) provided a letter sent to the Board by Skip Cameron, President. She also asked the Board to support action advising Director Hensley, City Manager Ott, and Mayor and Council to embrace, endorse, support and act on the BCF/BCDOG committed stakeholder proposal for maintaining and improving Bull Creek District Park and Bull Creek water quality. Key elements included: keeping the park open for current users, allow participation of the group in concept, design and planning of the restoration project, model Colorado model, endorse volunteer park monitor program and implement an enforcement program and citation writing for dog waste, diapers, trash etc.....

Kyle Allen announced that he thinks Watershed still does not have the basis on why the numbers fluctuate so much. He believes that the major source of fecal contamination is as result of the neighborhood adjacent to the watershed.

Ron Colidron is in support of PARD's and Watershed's plan for the park closure and the restoration plan.

Marceline Lassister, does not want another e-coli contamination at Emma Long. She indicated that the park doesn't have enough staff to handled adding a dog park to a park already crowded with campers, children who are swimming in the lake. Another concern is that there is no fence and suggests that we not use Emma Long either temporarily or permanently.

Bill Frazer, OLA Committee, suggested the Board not support making Emma Long an off-leash park. He also suggested that the issue with finding an alternate site be tasked to the Off Leash Area Advisory Committee.

Board Member Rivera moved to approve the restoration plan with the exception of recommendation #2. She further added that the task of finding a more suitable off leash area be directed to the new Off Leash Area Advisory Committee, seconded by Board Member Marler, Motion carried 5-0-1 with Board Member Hill abstaining.

13. Make a recommendation to the Director regarding 4410 Rivercrest Drive Boat Dock.

Board Member Rivera moved to approve the recommendation, seconded by Board Member Perales. Motion carried 4-1-1 with Board Member Guerrero abstaining.

#### F. Director's Report

Assistant Director Strong reported on the upcoming ACL Festival and the Holly Power Plant Decommissioning.

#### G. Future Items from the Board

Board Member Marler requested that we re-assess our time management due to the duration of the meetings and to limit times for briefs. She also requested that briefs that are informational only be send via email and to place public agenda items at the beginning of the agenda.

Board Member Guerrero appointed Jane Rivera to the Waller Creek Citizen Advisory Committee.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

